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Senate Natural Resources, Environment & Great Lakes Committee
c/o Lauren Michalak, Committee Clerk -- VIA E-mail

May 29, 2012

RE: Committee Meeting 5/31/12

As a member of the Governor's appointed Timber Advisory Council I will be at that meeting in Gaylord on 5/30/12 & 5/31/12. Since I cannot be in attendance, my written comments are below.

SB 1060 – SUPPORT
SB 1057 – STRONGLY OPPOSE
SB 1059 – STRONGLY OPPOSE
SB 1062 – OPPOSE

SB 1060	This bill appears to be the same as HB 4302 which “fixes” the Qualified Forestry Act (QFA) withdrawal fees.
SB 1057	This bill increases the ability of Conservation Districts (CDs) to supply goods and services to Michigan forestland owners in direct competition with existing Michigan businesses. It will significantly DECREASE the quantity and quality of forestry services available for Michigan landowners while utilizing taxpayer funds to compete with private businesses. There are much better positive alternatives. Detailed comments have been supplied in the past and can be re-submitted upon request.
SB 1059	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Creates expensive and un-necessary oversight by Conservation Districts (CDs), as opposed to the House version which places the responsibility of conformance on the landowner & the landowner's agent with limited compliance audits by the DNR.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. CD capacity is very limited and variable across the State.b. CD forestry programs are highly variable and not consistent.c. CD forestry programs have historically been based on entry level staff who directly supply forestry services to landowners, with a corresponding decrease in the total supply of services as private labor and capital is forced out of the market.2. Reduces the productivity threshold for QFA from 80% to 50%.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. QFA represents a significant transfer of funds from K-12 children to forestland owners. There needs to be a corresponding increase in economic activity which is attained with 80% productivity.3. Separates administration of the Commercial Forest Act (CFA) from the QFA.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. It is essential that administration of CFA and QFA be within the same State Agency so these related tax programs are consistently and efficiently managed.
SB 1062	The productivity threshold should be at 80% and not 50%, even if allowing for a combination of Qualified Agriculture and Qualified Forest.

Please call or e-mail if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Gerald Grossman, ACF & CF
MI Registered Forester #567